

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Background:

Olallie State Park CAMP encompasses Mount Washington (near North Bend), Twin Falls Trailhead and Trail and shoreline property along the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River. Considerations for future land acquisitions or coordinated land management of properties in the vicinity would result from the proposed direction for developing access and recreation opportunities within the Snoqualmie River watershed and the I-5 corridor.

During the Classification and Management Plan (CAMP) process, we develop thematic approaches and management alternatives which reflect a range of possible direction for recreation, resource protection and property management. With direction from stake holder groups, interested citizens and Park staff we have crafted three such Alternatives with a range of recreation access and development.

Each of the proposed Alternatives for the Olallie State Park's will include protection of the natural features, the protection of habitat and scenic resources while allowing for differing degrees of recreation intensity and type.

The area's proximity to urban-suburban populations makes it attractive to large populations. Ease of access to the expanse of coniferous forests, natural river shorelines and rocky mountain landscapes can promote deleterious impacts over time, if not carefully planned and the recreation experience well-managed. Therein lays the choice and the need to delineate the best suited approach for the State Park, in amongst much recreational use on public land base (federal and state), and the Mountain to Sound Greenway's landscape visions.

Recreation emphasis can be summarized into three distinct management directions; one focused on more adventure, skill-enhanced outdoor sports activities –the **Active Resource-Based Recreation Alternative** and one more focused on family introduction to outdoor recreation –the **Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative** and one that simply provides maximum access to the outdoors for all – the **Access Points-for-All Alternative**. The future development of recreation facilities and opportunities will differ according to the level of intensity and outdoor experienced envisioned. Following are descriptors for each of the alternatives and differ in key areas of access, facilities and recreation experience.

Note: A preferred alternative may result in a compromise or a combination of these different directions.

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Alternative Descriptions

The **Active Resource-Based Recreation Alternative** offers a wide range of opportunities to promote more vigorous outdoor recreation adventure such as primitive camping, rock climbing, hiking, novice to expert mountain biking, kayaking, race events and outdoor education.

Requirements, Components and Considerations:

Land Base: Requires extensive land base for trail systems and a variety of recreation skill-level opportunities.

Overnight Accommodations: Relies on backcountry, limited facilities and “base camping” for more extended recreational trips.

Design & Construction of Recreation Facilities: Minimal facilities as necessary for orientation, sanitation and safe access. Rustic backcountry style of facilities is recommended.

Interpretation: Emphasizes resource protection education and interpretation which enhances the recreational activity, e.g., detailed trail maps showing features and experience-level activity areas. Also provides interpretation for low-impact recreation and camping.

River Use and Access: Provides access areas for river kayaking/rafting, fishing. Facilities would be less developed, but managed to maintain the integrity of the site.

Trailheads: Access to these areas is anticipated to become very popular, considering the close proximity to urban populations; the facilities will be large enough to accommodate parking demands, yet should be more rustic in design and development. Include several dispersed “pods” of gravel parking, vault toilets, and simple rustic signage to complement the more rugged nature of the activities.

Stewardship Programming: Recreationists are encouraged to accommodate shared use of trails by equestrian, hiker, mountain biker. Backcountry rangers or volunteers are available for stewardship patrols. Stewardship is more active with citizen-volunteers and research programs to assess the impacts to resources and wildlife.

Trails: Trails are designed for shared use, and will strive for extended trail mileage. Trails are designed for a variety of experience levels and extend into other trail systems managed by other state and federal agencies. Development of maximum trail opportunities outside of protected environments is encouraged.

Recreational Programs: Recreation courses are available through concessions, races, and special events. Advanced recreation classes are encouraged through private vendors.

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Staff Presence: Providing State Park staff management presence may be required to patrol for recreation impacts, emergency assistance.

The **Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative** is an opportunities for beginner trail recreationists, families and novice recreationists to feel comfortable in the outdoors. Facilities are more modern and family-friendly and level of skill and experience necessary to recreate is minimal to moderate.

Requirements, Components and Considerations:

Land Base: Requires a land base which can accommodate foothills recreational trails and river access. Central core areas representing recreational settings and some passive recreation are needed, but not necessary to connect with large land base, except to achieve vistas and loop trail opportunities.

Overnight Accommodations: Provides a broad range of camping opportunities; e.g. campgrounds and cabins for family comfort. More primitive group camp facilities are located within this management approach.

Design & Construction of Recreation Facilities: Modern, rustic style. Can include; picnic shelters, bathrooms with water, interpretive and informational boards.

Interpretation: Provides more opportunities for basic outdoor education and nature immersion. Programs for individuals and families are encouraged. Self-guided interpretive trails and nature guide opportunities will be promoted.

River Use and Access: Safe access and developed picnic areas are encouraged. Swimming, fishing and low intensity river recreation activities are emphasized.

Trailheads: Access to these areas is anticipated to become very popular considering the close proximity to urban populations. As this alternative focuses on introductory trail and outdoor experiences, there will be a variety of trail designs; e.g. beginning trails to novice to more advanced routes, which are clearly signed for skill-levels.

Stewardship Programming: Stewardship activities are encouraged through introductory classes and self-guided training sessions. Volunteer steward programs would be developed to assist in the active care of the resources. Recreationists are encouraged to accommodate shared use of trails by equestrian, hiker, mountain biker. Backcountry rangers or volunteers are similarly available for stewardship patrols.

Trails: Most are designed for shared use, but are designed for slower paced travel and challenge. Trail development is mostly inclusive to the State Park properties with few connections to other trail systems.

Recreational Programs: Recreation courses are promoted on recreation skills, sustainability, outdoor self-reliance, etc.

Staff Presence: Provides a visible level of management presence for the safe State Park experience. Expect a moderate presence of staff on trail and along river areas.

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

The **Access Points-for-All Alternative** provides maximum access to the resource base for all users with minimal recreational development. Recreational trail development is minimal, but does provide access to more extensive trail experiences provided by neighboring public land property owners.

Requirements, Components and Considerations:

Land Base: Requires existing land base with some consideration for connectivity to other public recreation lands.

Overnight Accommodations: None provided. This alternative focuses on day-use outdoor activities and minimal development of facilities in any one area.

Design & Construction of Recreation Facilities: Less is more. Only provides parking and sanitation facilities and signs as necessary for orientation and way finding. Very low-key design, blend with environment.

Interpretation: Orientation signage and safety interpretation is required for access and enjoyment.

River Use and Access: Safe access and minimal picnic areas are provided. Swimming, fishing and low intensity river recreation activities are emphasized. Legal access areas are mapped on kiosks for appropriate use areas.

Trailheads: Access to these areas is anticipated to become very popular considering the close-in aspect. This alternatives recognizes the demand and provides for multiple, simple access points and minimal facilities; e.g. sanitary, parking, signage. Parking is signed, but largely undeveloped.

Stewardship Programming: Stewardship responsibilities are emphasized through signage and prior marketing materials.

Trails: Existing trails are designed for shared use (not motorized), but represent the least mileage developed in the alternative approaches. Recommend minimal new trail development, least impact and accommodations for demand.

Recreational Programs: None offered by State Parks.

Staff Presence: Provides a minimal level of management presence for safety of existing use and resource protection; including garbage patrol.

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Stakeholder Review February 11, 2010 Issaquah

1. The **Active Resource-Based Recreation Alternative** offers a full range of opportunities to promote more advanced outdoor recreation adventure such as primitive camping, rock climbing, hiking, novice to expert mountain biking, kayaking, race events and outdoor education.
2. The **Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative** is an opportunity for beginner trail recreationists, families and novice recreationists to feel comfortable in the outdoors. Facilities are more modern and family-friendly and level of skill and experience necessary to recreate is minimal to moderate.
3. The **Access Points-for-All Alternative** provides maximum access to the resource base for all users with minimal recreational development. Recreational trail development is minimal, enough to accommodate existing users.

Public Comments on Alternatives:

Active Resource-Based Recreation Alternative Comments:

- Keep climbing open, these are established and publicized climbs that are within short travel from the city and suburban areas.
- Connect with Sierra Club for environmental impacts and concerns
- Tie trailheads to freeway and transit access opportunities. Discuss with WA DOT regarding their corridor study and connection with Sound Transit
- Consider winter recreation opportunities
- Connect with Rattlesnake Ridge trail and westward extensions
- Create Mt. Washington peak trail with private land permission or acquisition

The Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative Comments:

- New trails and trailheads can provide needed opportunities in an area where USDA Forest Service trails are overused
- Connect to paved trail systems in nearby towns

Access Points-for-All Alternative:

- Manage "play areas" under one agency –consolidate mgmt. areas; DNR, USFS, State Parks
- Provide easy access and plenty of parking (patrolled)
- Connect with Rattlesnake Ridge trail and westward extensions
- Create Mt. Washington peak trail with private land permission or acquisition

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Stakeholder Review April 1, 2010 Issaquah

1. The **Active Resource-Based Recreation Alternative** offers a full range of opportunities to promote more advanced outdoor recreation adventure such as primitive camping, rock climbing, hiking, novice to expert mountain biking, kayaking, race events and outdoor education.
2. The **Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative** is an opportunity for beginner trail recreationists, families and novice recreationists to feel comfortable in the outdoors. Facilities are more modern and family-friendly and level of skill and experience necessary to recreate is minimal to moderate.
3. The **Access Points-for-All Alternative** provides maximum access to the resource base for all users with minimal recreational development. Recreational trail development is minimal, enough to accommodate existing users.

Public Comments on Alternatives:

Active Resource-Based Alternative:

- Connect trails and trail corridors
- Need for rugged experience, rustic facilities
- Provide "backcountry" experience near to urban areas
- Create a 20-30 mile loop trail for a statewide attraction
- Connect with Tiger Mt, Rattlesnake and DNR properties for trail expansion
- Strengthen boundary protection on watershed side of Mt. Washington...no bike access to watershed roads
- Consider primitive group camps for trail users
- Consider equestrian trail use and trailhead development needs
- Use volunteers to support trail funding and trail construction
- Consider white-water recreation use and need for river access areas and facilities

Threshold to Nature, the Beginners' Experience Alternative:

- Provide ample beginner-level trails opportunities
- Need trail maintenance and use supervision by State Parks...a higher quality of oversight than backcountry trail facilities
- Have low elevation trail loops
- Work with WDFS and Elk Conservation groups to protect and interpret wildlife habitat protection to new recreationists
- Consider ADA access opportunities in low elevation areas and around day-use picnic areas

Access Points-for-All Alternative:

- Need "out for a day" trail experience
- Trails are a higher priority than more trailhead facilities
- Provide access to climbing and hiking in Granite Creek area
- Include Mt. Washington summit into long-term boundary

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Additional Detailed Trail Comments (ref.: Mountain to Sound Greenway Trust)

Classification

What width should the right of way for the main trail corridors be?

There is a general feeling that a 50 foot corridor is a good baseline figure – so 25 feet on either side of the trail. However, since we are putting in new trail, there was a feeling that we may need to make some adjustments to trails as we gauge the actual quality of the ride, any issues with weather and terrain, or other unexpected factors. For example, there is already a feeling that the Cedar Butte Trail, a hiker only trail, may need some minor relocation and probably needs a wider corridor to accommodate that. Accordingly, a 100 foot corridor was proposed to add some flexibility to our trail work.

In addition to the current Olallie trail plan (Loop and out and back) are there any other reasonable/feasible trail routes that we should consider designating at this point.

-A mid level route joining the current route to the Ragnar staging area on the John Wayne Pioneer Trail (JWPT). This would be a welcome and valuable addition to the system, particularly for riders starting from the Exit 38 trail head. Encouraging use of multiple trail heads will disperse parking, lessening traffic in the already congested Rattlesnake Lake area.

There is a square-ish section of land on the NW corner of Olallie Park, actually on the west side of the main road in. Apparently, there are user built trails there that get a fair degree of riding.

-There are some climber-built trails around exit 38 that probably should be included in the recreation plan. Also any potential trails along lands between River and I-90. Climber routes along Hall Creek as well.

-The area north of the John Wayne trail includes an extensive network of multi-use trails with established use already existing. Besides providing additional riding opportunities these trails form an important link from the Snoqualmie Valley Trail to the JWPT. An improvement would be a new or rerouted trail from this existing system intersecting the JWPT at a point close to the start of the Olallie Trail. This would be valuable for riders who park or live in North Bend and would also help minimize trail head parking at Rattlesnake Lake. This might be an area that might benefit from a feasibility assessment of the trails and/or potential trails, and trail access.

It would be important to establish a corridor for this area or even classify it as a recreation resource area.

Trail Design

Develop interpretive elements to the trail -- signs, maps, graphics, etc. These would be placed at key stopping points (top of climbs, etc) where people would naturally stop to re-group.

There was general consensus that signage on this trail network would detract from the backcountry experience we are trying to establish, especially as we moved further up the trail. There was also the feeling that we need to remain focused on our primary goal of trail building. Accordingly, I don't think there was a tremendous amount of support for an interpretive sign system, except in developed recreation sites; e.g. trail heads, picnic area.

Divestiture and Road Decommission

State Parks is planning to cede the south section of Olallie to SPU and the watershed, and SPU pledged in the meeting to grant a trails easement for the

Stage 2 - Olallie State Park - CAMP Alternatives & Comments

Olallie Trail. This is the critical section about 2.5/3 miles up that needs to go through the watershed. SPU has also asked that some southeastern roads be decommissions by SP and USFS to control access into the watershed.

-Having SPU partner with the Forest Service and State Parks to remove road corridors provides a nice opportunity to create some trail corridors that are more interesting to ride/hike than the original road grades, provided that the agency has determined that the road corridors in question will be desirable as trails. Regarding trail connections in Change Creek Basin, if this is done after the Olallie trail is built that would be best, so trails contractors can access the site more easily.

Other Considerations for Recreation Development- Include:

- 1) Enhanced day use near Rangers House with comfort station and room for larger groups.
- 2) Shoulder area west along access road from Rangers House back to I-90 should be restored, a trail placed along it, several small day-use access points with picnic spots placed there etc.
- 3) Group camp with trail to Iron Horse
- 4) More interpretation
- 5) Better climber access.